6/8/71

Mr. John Leonard, Editor
New York Times Sunday Book Review
229 W. 43 St.,
New York, N.Y. 10036

Dear Mr. Leonard,

Because you have not responded to any of my letters, where one would have thought you would and would feel impelled to, I want to be certain you are not unaware of the relevant statement of Times policy with regard to your own review of Jim Garrison's book that was entirely altered after the first edition.

The assistant managing editor used these words:

"Our book reviewers are granted full freedom to write whatever they wish about books and authors they are dealing with, but we do not permit personalized editorials in the book columns...the book columns are not intended for that kind of editorializing."

It would seem that what you at least permitted Kaplan to do, what he was given to understand was expected of him, what you might without prompting have expected of him from his record, or what was done in your name, whichever formulation you find least uncomfortable, is in the clearest possible violation of this statement of Times policy, expressed to justify the total corruption of a review of a book on a political assassination by eliminating all that was favorable.

What Kaplan did and what you published is exactly what the Times says is impermissible in its book columns. I again ask why you made an exception of me and my book.

What was excised from your review of the Garrison book was "routine editing", this policy statement says. That hardly explains the change in headline. But if that was only routine editing, how can you explain publishing anything Kaplan wrote about me, for it was all personalized, or about the book, for that was all editorializing?

It seems all to much that the Times has a special policy for this subject and that its book sections have a special one for me.

It also seems, I am sad to confess, that your job means more to you than your personal integrity or your apparently misrepresented concern for a decent society. This would be a greater tragedy than so dishonest and libellous a personal attack as you published in the sheep's clothing of a "review".

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg